DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 464 262 CE 083 230

AUTHOR	Munoz, Maria D.; Munoz, Marco A.
TITLE	John Dewey on Democracy, Education, Experience, and Communication: Implications for Adult Education in Developing Democratic Organizations.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	25p.
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Adult Learning; Conventional Instruction; *Democracy; *Education Work Relationship; Educational Environment; *Educational Philosophy; Educational Principles; Employer Employee Relationship; Interaction; *Labor Force Development; Nonformal Education; Organizational Climate; *Organizational Development; Teacher Student Relationship; Trainers; Training; Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS	*Dewey (John); Human Resources Professionals; Learning Organizations

ABSTRACT

John Dewey's reflections regarding education, experience, and communication remain relevant to all educators, especially educators and trainers in the field of human resource development (HRD). Dewey viewed education as a process of growing in meaning. He stated, "all genuine education comes about through experience." Another essential concept in Dewey's philosophy is communication, which Dewey considered a social process of seeking, finding, and having a common purpose. According to Dewey's philosophy, experience, communication, and education constitute a triad in a democratic environment and serve to guarantee a culture's continuity. Dewey's triad of experience, communication, and education can become a powerful tool in designing and implementing processes of HRD programs. By viewing training programs through the lenses of this triad, HRD professionals can transform them into educative programs. By addressing training objectives through educative processes rather than through isolated training activities, an organization can attempt to shape employees' values and behaviors in accord with its own values and mission. HRD specialists should consider the following elements of Dewey's democratic ideal: (1) the existence of genuine shared purposes within the members of the organization; (2) freedom to communicate with other groups; and (3) authentic educative experiences that will enhance personal and social growth. (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

CE

ED 464 262

John Dewey on Democracy, Education, Experience, and Communication: Implications for Adult Education in Developing Democratic Organizations

Maria D. Munoz

Marco A. Munoz

Department of Leadership, Foundations, and Human Resource Education

School of Education Building, Room 338

University of Louisville

Louisville, KY 40292

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Munoz

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

CE0631230

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes Dewey's conceptualization on education, experience, and communication and states a description on how these elements are interconnected in a democratic environment. Dewey's philosophy of education, although generally focused on schools, extends beyond the formal school context. In fact, the believe that Dewey's conceptualization applies only to formal education limits the richness and implications of his philosophy to developing democratic organizations. In this study, education will be considered in a broad sense, as the development of persons and not only as a process for developing cognitive growth of children in school settings. Adults have multiple settings for learning and developing roles such as the work environment. Implications of Dewey's philosophy for adult education in developing democratic organizations are discussed, especially for educators in the growing field of human resource development (HRD).

Education

According to Dewey, education is growth leading to more growth; "education is growth for the sake of growth" (Dewey, 1980). True education is both worthwhile by it self and a life long process. Before going further, it is relevant to talk about the significance of growth. Dewey considers growth in different ways, namely cognitively, attitudinally, socially, and ethically. In other words, education will provide several "tools" that will open multiple possibilities for human development. For example, an educative process will help a person in achieving more knowledge about something; in turn, by getting this new knowledge, the person becomes capable of further and more complex knowledge. Educative processes will also impact a person's attitudes. These attitudes may be toward him/her self, toward the world, toward knowledge it self, or toward other human beings. The effect of education on social and ethical growth is that it will make a person able to interact with other human beings without hurting anybody's dignity and/or biological life (Dewey, 1980).

Most importantly, perhaps, Dewey considers education as a process of growing in meaning. On one hand, the word "growing" indicates that education is an active and continuous process that results in developing capacities for further education. On the other hand, the word "meaning" gives an idea of how education helps a person to make sense of the world and the individual's life; how education provides more possibilities; and how a person becomes aware of the consequences of things and events in the world (Raitz, 1998).

Since the idea of meaning is a key concept in Dewey's explanation of education, it is central to take a closer look to what meaning is for Dewey. In the basic sense of the word, there is the meaning of a thing, that is, what a person can do with something, like a pen. An individual can write a letter, underline an idea on a book, or make a hole in a plastic bag... A person can find multiple -even infinite- meanings of a thing and use it accordingly. Meaning can also denote the consequences and relationships of events and things (Raitz, 1998). For example, there is a meaningful experience when a person realizes that water may stop thirst, may stop a fire, or may burn if water is hot. These are just some of the infinitive possibilities of what human beings can do with water. Through their lives, human beings are seeking to understand the world where they live. Therefore, they develop and share meanings. For this reason, Dewey considers that education is ultimately social. Education –like communication– imply a social and historical process of having shared meanings and purposes.

It is also relevant to clarify that, when Dewey states that education is growing in meaning, this growing can be quantitative –more meaning from different experiences– as well as qualitative, deeper understanding of the world and its possibilities (Raitz, 1998). However, quantitative growth in meaning does not mean filling somebody's head with facts. Sometimes, facts may be needed; however, the educational process takes place when the person, adult or child, is free and able to process that information (i.e., to pursue its meanings). When this happens, it can be assured that a development of a person's mind has occurred (Wood, 1983).

The previous idea makes it pertinent to differentiate between education and training. According to Dewey, training focuses on teaching people how to behave under specific circumstances. For example, a person may be trained on what are the steps to follow to write a document in a word processor. However, for Dewey, what is important in education is to promote the person's development, not the mechanization of behavior. Then the main difference between training and education is that education will teach people how to think (Wood, 1983).

Another important aspect is that Dewey conceived education as a unified whole. For him the social and psychological factors of education are an organic unity. In other words, it means that in the educative process there are two types of interests. On one hand, personal concerns; and on the other hand, society's interests (Raitz, 1998). Consequently, "a truly human education consists in an intelligent direction of fundamental activities in the light of the possibilities and necessities of the social situation" (Dewey, 1983).

Experience

As Dewey affirmed, "all genuine education comes about through experience." Due to this "intimate and necessary relation," he considered it indispensable for educators who want to develop an education based on experience to have a correct idea of experience (Dewey, 1988). However, Dewey did not give a clear concept of experience. Consequently, it is a difficult idea to derive from his philosophy. The following paragraphs will present some of the main ideas found regarding this key concept of experience.

Generally, Dewey considered experience as doing, trying, acting upon the environment to modify it, and suffering the consequences of these actions. This action in the environment is really an interaction of human beings within nature; human beings are part of nature; and they can only act within it (Raitz, 1998). Let us go deeper into these important ideas.

First, it should be mentioned that Dewey was a natural empiricist. Dewey believed that experience is the source of all human ideals and concepts. There is not innate knowledge or an external "world of ideas" that has to be reached by human beings. It is by doing, trying, interacting with the environment, that people develop "tools", such as language and knowledge, that will make it possible for them to understand and transform the environment (Raitz, 1998).

Second, experience is generated from interactions of human beings with nature. But since human beings are part of nature, people interact in unity with nature, as part of the whole. As part of nature, we are biological organisms like any other animal, with senses and instincts. However, human beings are different from other animals in that we have developed the notion of time. The human race has past, present, and future; in other words, a history. And, there is a transmission of values, meanings, and ideals from one generation to another. This way of experiencing the world and the transmission/communication of meanings makes it possible that human beings have a consciousness of history and culture (Raitz, 1998).

Third, Dewey considered that thought, sensations, and actions are a unity rather than separated experiences. That is why he criticized other interpretations,

such as the "reflex arc concept." This theory presented a different idea of human behavior (Raitz, 1998). For example, from the perspective of the "reflex arc concept," when a person drinks some water from a river, there have happened several experiences: one when the eyes perceived the river (sensation); a second when the nervous system responds to the visual image with the need of thirst; a third when the arm moves to get some water. From Dewey's point of view, with this type of analysis, experience has been fragmented because all these facts are really functions of a whole. Sensation, thought, and action conform all together in one experience. The fact is a person (who is part of nature) interacting with the environment. Both – person and environment– are two and one whole at the same time. The ability of human beings to perceive this experience as a whole makes learning possible. But, the learning issue will be addressed in another section.

Finally, Dewey also discussed the differences between the traditional empirical perspective and his own experimental view. On one hand, the "empirical" reference conceives experience as rigid, "dominated by past, customs, and routine." On the other hand, the "experimental" perspective sees experience as a whole with a reflection that enables a person to go beyond the senses and tradition. This "experimental" way of understanding experience allows discovering new and infinitive possibilities of a better life. For that reason, Dewey stated that education could be considered as an "emancipation and enlargement of experience" (Dewey, 1978).

Communication

Raitz (1998) clearly stated how communication is an essential concept in Dewey's philosophy. For Dewey, communication is a social process of seeking, finding, and having a common purpose. Communication must involve two or more persons. Here involvement means that the entire person –physically, psychologically, and socially, is participating in a conjoint activity with other one.

The wonder of communication, as Dewey called it, has some relevant characteristics. First, even though communication always has a physical aspect, there is no need of a physical interaction among individuals to have shared purposes. For example, people in the same country share meanings, ideals, and purposes without having the need of any physical and direct interaction. This wonder is possible because of communication processes among citizens from different generations. A second characteristic is that the fact of having a common end shapes human behavior and makes two people able to figure out the situation and even assume the point of view of the other person. In other words, when people have common purposes their actions and energies are guided in such a way that every member of the community will contribute to achieve the common purpose. Moreover, people's involvement in a conjoint effort makes them share ways to act, analyze and understand the world. Third, communication is not passive. Communication is action because there is a relationship between at least two people. During the communication process participants (two or more) are actively involved in an effort of finding, seeking and having common purposes. Fourth, this inter-action is social, not egocentric, because

people are sharing ideas, feelings, and purposes. A genuine communication does not mean that one person or group of persons will impose their ideas. The shared purposes and meanings are the result of communication not imposition. For this reason, Dewey says that sharing is the fruit of communication (Raitz, 1998).

Finally, Dewey considered that communication is something needed by human beings. Anybody can live isolated. People live in groups that can be simple (as a family) or more complex (as the culture of a society). These ways of living together are characterized by communication. For example, for a family communication makes possible the definition of its shared ends. Therefore, all members in the family will modify their behavior according to what they consider beneficial and valuable for the family. How does it happen? Parents communicate/transmit to their children their values, tradition, ideals, and ultimate goals. In a more complex situation, communication has a relevant role to develop a society. There is a transmission/communication of these common values, ideals, goals, and tradition across different social groups that have commonalties among them. The fact of having shared purposes make people experience the notion of belonging to a society with history and culture (Raitz, 1998).

I. Experience, Communication, and Education as interrelated elements in Dewey's philosophy

The following section will explain what kind of interconnection exists among the three elements. First, it will present the relationship between experience and

communication. Second, how and when education is linked to experience. Third, it will describe the relationship between education and communication. Finally, it will present the triad, how the three elements conform into an organic unity.

Experience and Communication

Dewey considers communication as "the naturalistic link" between human beings' experiences and their meanings, ideals, and values. The communication process operates as the instrument that facilitates a person making sense of the environment. Again, Dewey is rejecting the dualism that divides life into two worlds, one of ideas and the other of physical nature. The author also does not accept the existence of super-natural forces that guide or illuminate humans' mind and thoughts. This natural world is the only world that exists, and human beings developed their ideas from the interactions within this world. The role of communication is to link "natural events and the origin and development of meanings" (Raitz, 1998).

Human beings are creatures of nature, like any other animal. Nonetheless, human beings are different because they become "thinking and knowing animals, and create the realm of meanings." Communication (written or oral) is the "tool" which transfers past experiences from one generation to the next one. Human beings have the potentiality to share experiences and create shared meanings from them (Raitz, 1998). For example, in the work place, let us assume that a person wants to share an opinion about how to decrease employees' absenteeism. The individual has to

express the ideas in a way that will be understood by others. At the same time, co-workers will also try to view the information from other's perspective. This ideal communication will give benefits based on existence of shared purposes, namely, getting the best for the organization by decreasing employees' absenteeism.

Finally, it is important to confirm that Dewey consider communication as "a natural wonder, not a miracle." It is not a miracle since there is no super-natural source. The mental process that occurs in human beings' brain is part of their biological nature. Through communication these mental processes become shared meanings and culture. That is why communication is "the naturalistic link" between experience and nature (Raitz, 1998).

Experience and Education

Dewey wrote a book called Experience and Education. In this book, Dewey stated that there is an "organic connection" between personal experiences and education. However, he says that "the belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuine and equally educative." Consequently, Dewey classified experiences into educative, mis-educative, and non-educative. Educative experiences are those that promote an individual's growth in the sense explained above while defining education. What makes an experience educative will be more fully analyzed later. Mis-educative experiences are the ones that affect a person in a manner that narrows the possibilities for further experiences. Therefore, mis-educative experiences reduce ways for further growth. For example, it is very common to listen students' (young

and adults) talking about their "dislike" toward mathematics. Most of these people developed this attitude due to "bad" experiences while learning mathematics in childhood. Their experiences were mis-educative since they develop an attitude that instead of make them grow, created a careless attitude toward further experiences in this subject or any other knowledge that has to do with numbers. Finally, non-educative experiences are those that are neutral. Those experiences are disconnected. The person may enjoy or not enjoy the experience, but it is just a moment that dissipates without adding or taking anything from the person's ability to grow (Dewey, 1988).

Since not all experiences are educative it is relevant to analyze the quality of them. If educators want to provide education based upon experience, they will promote present engaging experiences that will remain in the person's brain as little seeds for further growth and develop positive attitudes toward future experiences. Dewey (1988) stated that there are two principles or criteria to interpret whether or not an experience is educative. These two principles are continuity and interaction. The principle of continuity of experience means that a person's present experience is connected with the past and the future. The current experience is being shaped by previous experiences and will, in some way, affect the quality of upcoming experiences. Furthermore, Dewey says that continuity of experiences has to lead toward growth. As it was stated before, growth means development in different areas, namely, cognitive, attitudinal, social, and moral. There is continuity of experience in spoiling a child. Nevertheless, these experiences are not educative

since they limit the person's level of development by making the individual incompetent to overcome obstacles in life and put effort to achieve goals in life. Experiences are like moving forces. Therefore, the educator has to pay attention to the experiences that are provided in the educational setting and promote only those experiences that will make students desire and seek further educative experiences.

The principle of interaction states that experiences do not exist in a vacuum. There are objective conditions, namely physical, social, economic, historical, occupational, local community, and other individuals. Moreover, these conditions are the results of past human activities and affect the type of experiences that a person will have. However, it does not mean that the student (young or adult) is a passive receptor of objective conditions. Dewey affirmed that a normal experience is an "interplay" of both the objective (external) conditions and the internal (personal) factors. These personal factors may be needs, desires, purposes, and capacities. Together, the external conditions and the internal factors form a situation (Dewey, 1988). For example, the objective conditions will be different for a person who lives in a developed country like the United States of America than for a person that lives in Haiti, that is an underdeveloped country. The experiences are different since the history, economic conditions, and culture are dissimilar. Furthermore, even people in the same family will have different experiences because each individual is unique. An experience will be the result of the "transactions" between the individual and the environment.

These two principles, continuity and interaction, are united. Together, they provide a measure to know whether an experience is valuable and significant (Dewey, 1988). For example, an educative experience such as learning to write will open new possibilities to a person. The individual may write a letter to communicate ideas or even become a writer of famous novels. For example, it would have been a loss if García Márquez could not write. According to Dewey (1988), the experience of learning to write develops the skills and knowledge in a given situation. Later, these elements will become tools for understanding and dealing with future situations. One essential element in educative experiences is how the person gains the attitude of life long learning where writing, in this case, becomes a tool for new, broader, and better experiences.

Education and Communication

According to Raitz (1998), Dewey says that education needs communication because human beings are social entities. This need of communication can be seen in a child whose crying and babbling become ways to attract others attention. Moreover, "that need of communication is a desire to discover meaning." Human beings are the only animals that create meanings.

At the beginning, Dewey (1980) focused his interest in the connection between communication and education in school settings. Nonetheless, he also realized the essential role of communication in relation to sharing cultural meanings and ideals in broader settings. For that reason Dewey said that [the ideal] social life is identical with communication. Furthermore, "all communication (and hence all

genuine social life) is educative." Since education is an organic unity of social and psychological dimensions, communication becomes the 'perfect' mean to coordinate and harmonize both interests. For example, in an educative setting like a classroom it would be normal to find diversity of interests and experiences. Then, an educative experience should promote the manifestation of all type of interests in a cooperative spirit in order to define the shared purposes that will make that group of people become an educative community.

From what Dewey stated above, communication is not a one-way process. Students are not passive recipients of information that will be useful to repeat or write accurately during testing. Students have their own interests and dislikes and they bring those to the classroom. The educative process will be developed as long as the shared purposes are freely defined and achieved with the participation of all.

The Triad: Experience, Communication, and Education in a Democratic Environment

According to Dewey (1980), all societies need education to guarantee continuity of their culture. Through the years, one generation transmits/communicates to the next one the fruit of its experiences, namely, knowledge, customs, values, institutions, occupations, traditions, and all the specific characteristics that distinguish their way of life. Therefore, communication makes possible having shared experiences and meanings, which give people identity and a sense of belonging to a whole, to a culture. The culture will not survive if it is not

transmitted or not shared by the next generation. That is why education has a crucial role in the prolongation of society.

Moreover, this communication/transmission of culture does not imply a passive role from the young generation; quite the opposite. The new generation has to develop the skills and attitudes to adapt and renew society in response to changes in the environment. That is why Dewey considered education as growing. People and societies are constantly growing, developing new possibilities for a better life (Raitz, 1998). Thus, it is relevant to mention how the current world has changed dramatically and continues to change faster than ever. Now, people (young or adults) need to learn how to adapt to a "new world." The development of technology and global economies promotes rapid changes and requires people with new skills and abilities at the work place. This is one of the reasons why adults are looking for education (Merriam, & Caffarella, 1999).

Dewey (1980) also presented how education, communication, and experience are interrelated while he developed his ideas regarding democracy. In correspondence to his natural empiricism, Dewey looked into factual and different ways of associated life to find the characteristics of the ideal democracy. After observing and analyzing several types of communities, Dewey determined some standards. First, the community would have a "number of interests consciously shared by members." And second, the community would promote "interaction and cooperation with other groups." Based on these standards, Dewey presented the family as the positive model of community. On one hand, family members share a wide range and abundant

interests. For example, family members want to continue their biological life. They also share properties, values, friends, neighbors, entertainment, opinions, and others. On the other hand, these variety of interests open more possibilities for communication among family members and with other groups. One important characteristic is the freedom and multiplicity of communication with other forms of community (Raitz, 1998).

Until now, the clear element in the definition of democracy is communication, having shared purposes. However, the other two elements, education and experience, come into play when Dewey affirms that "broader, freer, richer communication is identical with education" because it encourages the development of family members and sharing meanings of human experience. Therefore, democracy is the best context to ensure higher quality of experiences, fullest sharing of meanings of human experiences, and promotion of growth. Any society whose members live under repression and coercion will not have open possibilities to develop educative experiences, nor the freedom to develop shared purposes through persuasion rather than repression (Dewey, 1980).

II. Conclusions: Implications for Adult Education in Democratic Organizations

Close to the beginning of a new century, it can be confirmed that Dewey's philosophical thoughts are still relevant for educators. Dewey's reflections continue to address the main concerns of teachers and administrators in formal and non-formal educational settings. Educators and trainers in the area of Human Resource Development (HRD) are not an exception, although Dewey did not focus his

attention on adult education. Therefore, this section will briefly state how Dewey's philosophy of education, communication, and experience has implications for professionals in the area of adult education.

Education, communication, and experience are a triad; they are a unity in educative processes. This triad can become a powerful "tool" in the design and implementation processes of HRD programs. If HRD professionals look at some of the training programs through the lenses of this triad, training programs can be changed into educative programs. For example, training on diversity issues would be transformed into educative processes. Since the objective is developing attitudes and values, diversity training (among other issues) could be addressed through educative processes rather than isolated training activities. By doing so, the organization, as a community, will try to shape employees' values and behaviors in accord with its own values and mission.

As Dewey stated, associations tend to influence their members' behavior through their shared purposes. However, not all organizations will provide educative experiences to their members. Therefore, what would organizations have to do to provide educative experiences to their employees? Dewey (1980) considered the democratic ideal as the criterion to determine when an organization is contributing to individual's and society's growth. The democratic ideal considers some elements: a) the existence of genuine shared purposes within the members of the organization; b) freedom to communicate with other groups; and c) authentic educative experiences that will enhance personal and social growth.

Therefore, according to Dewey's perspective, organizations are challenged to become democratic. The method to analyze the implications of having genuine shared purposes within organizations is to see what already exists. For example, some bureaucratic organizations (such as military forces) would face more difficulties to have authentic shared purposes and free communication with other groups in the sense that Dewey states the democratic ideal. One reason is that in this type of organizations the decision making process takes place at the top level of the structure. The rest of the members implement the decisions without discussion.

Another interesting situation is the one within organizations where employees do not really care about the organization's purposes. What employees seek is to have a job and a better income to improve their personal lives. Therefore, in some for-profit organization, employees have become shareholders of the company. This method has made employees to share the main purpose of the organization that is making money. Moreover, due to high levels of competition, most of the times, the organization limits their employees' relationships because the organization is afraid of information disclosures. Therefore, this way of sharing purposes is not congruent with Dewey's philosophy of education.

Nonetheless, in some cases even non-profit organizations do not provide educative experiences. For example, the student had a mis-educative job experience in a non-profit organization. This institution limited their employees' communication even with family members and promoted contradictions between job responsibilities

and family. Top management wanted to impose their conception of how and when an employee was committed with the purposes of the organization.

However, it seems that non-profit organizations are closer to experience the democratic ideal that Dewey proposed. For example, employees in a higher education setting, such as a University, are more likely to share (freely and fully) the purposes of providing education to the students, collaborating with the community, and contribute to the development of new knowledge through research. According with every individual's skills, employees will play a role to achieve these common purposes without experiencing limitations to share and contribute with other groups in the society.

Another type of non-profit organization is the religious community. Dewey disagreed with some characteristics inside religious organizations. One of them was the existence of supernatural beliefs and dogmas because this way of thinking and behaving narrows the possibilities for personal and social growth. However, Dewey admired the power of faith and how it had the potentiality to develop a community where it would be possible to experience the sense of belonging to a whole and genuinely share ideas, beliefs, and feelings. Dewey also recognized how religion could promote in its members the desire of a better world and act upon that ideal (Raitz, 1998).

At this point, it is relevant to mention that some for-profit organizations have implemented methods that are congruent with Dewey's philosophy of education. For example, there have been efforts on teamwork and employees empowerment. Some

of the characteristics of these efforts are to promote shared purposes, unified commitment, collaborative climate, and personal growth of team members. The existence of these elements is considered relevant for the individual's and organizations' development.

Researchers in adult education agree that experience is a key element for adult learning (Merriam, & Caffarella, 1999). This statement harmonizes with Dewey when he said that genuine education has its roots in people's experiences. However, he clarified that not all experiences are educative. For that reason, HRD professionals have to remember that employees have past, present, and will have future experiences that may not be educative. As educators or trainers, it is relevant to consider people's past experiences because they can become barriers for learning or they may be a good source of learning. At the same time, educators and trainers have to promote present educative experiences during the implementation of their programs.

Another area of concern in adult education is the development of experiential learning. Dewey supports the validity and relevance of this concept with his ideas on experience and education and the principles of continuity and interaction. It is very important for HRD professionals to think and review the type of experiences that the organization is providing to all employees. Are those experiences promoting adults' growth, developing their abilities to learn more? For example, what happens to new employees? They are usually willing to learn as much as they can to fit in the organization. However, five years later in some organizations, we may take a look at

those same employees and realize that they are programmed to behave in some undesirable ways and fear or reject any changes inside the organization. These types of behaviors indicate that employees' experiences have not been educative. According to Dewey, what happened to these people is that they have lost their souls. They are no longer able to act intelligently in new situations. The experiences have been mis-educative, since people have not developed "the most important attitude that can be formed... that of desire to go on learning..." (Dewey, 1988)

In correspondence to Dewey, an experiential learning process will make a person get the full meaning of each present or past experience and prepare the individual to do so in the future. This is the key element in education: prepare the person for a life long journey, learning with no end. Adults spend a lot of their time at the work place. Most of their experiences are interrelated with this important role. Therefore, paraphrasing Peter Senge (1990), organizations need to become "educative organizations." Organizations need to provide employees with educative experiences, those that will challenge their minds and make employees able to grow. John Dewey, the great American philosopher, has a lesson to educator and trainers: make learners able to find in life the love of life (Raitz, 1998).

In conclusion, education is a social process. According to Dewey (Raitz, 1998), education is related with particular social ideals. In the context of the workplace, two elements characterize a democratic ideal of HRD efforts: a) the existence of genuine shared purposes, probably articulated by a vision and a mission,

and, b) the existence of freedom to communicate with other groups, probably articulated by a communication strategy both inside and outside the organization.

References

Dewey, J. (1988). Experience and education. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), The later works 1925-1953. Vol. 13: 1938 – 1939. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University.

Dewey, J. (1983). Human nature and conduct. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), The middle works 1899-1924. Vol. 14: 1922. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University.

Dewey, J. (1980). Democracy and Education. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), The middle works 1899-1924. Vol. 9: 1916. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University.

Dewey, J. (1978). How we think. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), The middle works 1899-1924. Vol.6: 1910 – 1911. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University.

Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1999). Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide. (2nd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Raitz, K. L. (1998). Dewey on Communication. Unpublished manuscript.

Senge, P. M. (1990) The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday.

Taylor, H. (1973). In G. Dykhuizen, The life and mind of John Dewey. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University.

Wood, C. W. (1983). Report of interview with Dewey. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), The middle works, 1899-1924. Vol. 13: 1921 – 1922. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University.